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Recommended Student Counseling Referral Procedures for Faculty and House Directors.
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This report outlined a referral procedure to facilitate communications among faculty guidance-advisors, house directors, and the student personnel service division technical staff who provide student counseling assistance. Three basic types of referrals were discussed, namely self-referrals, faculty/house director referrals, and compulsory referrals. Guidelines were provided for the faculty advisors and house directors on how to deal with students requiring counseling services and how to determine when the various methods of referral are appropriate. (MB)

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RECOMMENDED STUDENT COUNSELING

REFERRAL PROCEDURES

FOR

FACULTY AND HOUSE DIRECTORS

JC 690 359

Harcum Junior College

Bryn Mawr, Penna.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
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INFORMATION

Introduction

This referral procedure is intended to facilitate communications among faculty guidance-advisors, house directors and the Student Personnel Service Division technical staff who are available for student counseling assistance. It is adapted from "Counseling Referral Procedures" issued by the Department of Student Personnel Service, Wausau Technical Institute. While the matter of referring a student for additional counseling is not a complicated task, there are certain aspects of effective administration that require understanding and insight to insure maximum student benefits from the counseling services offered by the college: hence this publication.

Dr. Boris Blai, Jr.
Director: Student Personnel Services

September, 1967

I. The Self-Referral

What we decide may not always be the best decision, but it is the decision for which we do assume responsibility. Conversely, those decisions we borrow from others by suggestion, advice or request, definitely lack the commitment of self-argument and personal responsibility.

Essentially the difference, if the decision is someone else's, is in split-responsibility. We have someone with whom to share the blame and generally feel less responsibility for the actions necessary to make the decision work. When the decision is ours alone and in effect is based upon self-argument, our self-esteem is greatly involved, and we are far more inclined (motivated) to make the decision successful. It follows that the easiest student to counsel is the one who wants to be counseled. This is the self-referral student.

As is true for any decision based on information, the self-referral student must have knowledge of the purposes and values of counseling. Faculty and house directors are the most logical and best source of such information by reason of opportunity; their daily contact with the students. In short, faculty members and house directors who support the counseling program by providing accurate information concerning the purposes and values of the counseling service enhance the likelihood of self-referrals.

Thus, the self-referral student is the one who decides to be counseled because the information provided by the faculty member or house director sounds to her like a "good idea". In effect, the student is influenced, not necessarily by a direct suggestion or demand, but by her own self-commitment based on information that she has concluded will help her particular problem. Of course, after the student is in the counseling office it is then the counselor's competence which determines the extent to which the student is assisted in the resolution of her concern.

How should the faculty/house director enhance the likelihood of student self-referral? By precept! The image you have regarding counseling will determine the kind of support you give the counseling program. Tone of voice, inflection, omission, insincerity or sincerity are all conveyed to the student for her personal analysis of your opinion of the counseling program at Harcum.

Certainly if it is the responsibility of faculty/house directors to support the counseling program, then it is clearly the responsibility of the counseling service to furnish faculty/house directors reasons why they should support counseling.

The following suggestions are intended to aid faculty/house directors in their efforts to actively, and on a sustained basis, support the counseling services offered by the college.

1. All explanations of counseling should be conveyed in such a manner that the listener will perceive counseling to be a natural, integrated part of the total educational program offered by Harcum.

Occasionally everyone has the need to orient themselves in relation to the questions,"Who am I?", "Where am I in life?", and "Where am I going?" Presenting counseling as an accepted student service of Harcum will often prevent that student from viewing counseling as a psychological sanctuary for the "less fortunate" or "problem" student. Presenting a positive image will make counseling more acceptable to those who manifest a degree of functional instability. Counseling is not just for those we describe as "maladjusted" or "personality problems." There are times in the lives of all of us when we can benefit from helpful, supportive counseling.

2. Present your explanation of counseling services to the entire class rather than individual orientation. In the case of house directors, the same principle applies. Present the explanation to your entire group rather than individually.

Usually, the most appropriate time to present such information is at the beginning of the fall semester. This will allow time for those students in need of counseling to reflect upon its possible value to them, thus increasing the probabilities for self-referral.

It is also usually wise to invite students to stop after class or dormitory discussion if they have more questions or would like more information. Frequently, that student who is withdrawn or shy will"test" the sincerity of the counseling program by questioning you in a more private setting.

3. Emphasize that the student's participation is desired and invited rather than compelled.

Point out that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." That there is nothing "wrong" in a student being concerned with the many new adjustments to college life and dropping in to discuss her concerns with the college counselor is entirely acceptable and understandable. Remind the student that very often in "talking out" a problem, much of the problem is resolved; that for this very reason the college has provided on its staff in the Student Personnel Services Division personnel competent to assist them in resolving their individual concerns.

4. Assure students that discussions with counseling personnel are on a confidential basis, and that the counselor will not divulge any part of the contents of the discussion without the permission of the student.

II. Faculty/House Director Referrals

Both faculty members and house directors frequently encounter the student who is presenting some type of problem that in their judgment should be evaluated by the college counseling staff. Unfortunately it is often true that the student has never sought the services of the Student Personnel Services staff.

It is helpful to understand, generally, why a student refuses or is reluctant to avail herself of counseling services. Expressed reasons will of course vary with each student; however this reticence usually stems from the student's fear of facing the realities of her self-concept in relation to her problems. Such are not necessarily just shy and withdrawn students but may also be the students who are aggressive in behavior and are having more difficulty than the former types in facing the realities of their personalities.

Before anyone can objectively explore the realities of her personality, a degree of humility must be a part of the self-analysis. In our society humility is not an easy trait to come by. Nevertheless, humility is necessary exploration of the "self" (the person one believes one is). It is necessary because humility is a form of inner strength, a kind of dignity that makes it less necessary for a person to pretend.

The student who has not sought counseling and manifests a functional behavior problem is in essence pretending. More than likely, she is rationalizing and repressing those aspects of her behavior that threaten her concept of her self-image. This type of behavior is usually made up of unrealistic self-appraisals. However, in order to maintain her facade against apparent and unpleasant environmental raalities (such as academic failure, lack of social skills, personality conflicts, etc.), she must pro-Ject the responsibility of her deficiencies (real or imagined) to some object or person, often a faculty member, house director, "the administration" or "the college."

If these conditions prevail and the faculty member/house director says, "I'm referring you to the college counseling service because of your past behavior; please go see the counselor as soon as possible", you may well aggravate rather than alleviate her situation. The student's response may be a defensive one, defiant or even hostile. Should such a student proceed to the counseling office, her purpose, in this frame of mind, will be to defend her pretentious role rather than face the realities of her personality.

To help avoid this type of negative, unpleasant student response, the following suggestions are offered to adapt to your own use:

1 - Thoroughly explain to the student the circumstances that you believe are reasons for the referral you are considering. Do <u>not</u> mention counseling at this time.

2 - Allow the student <u>full opportunity</u> to "explain" her side of the story.

3 - Then, if you are still convinced the student would benefit from counseling referral, inquire as to why she has not sought counseling previously.

However, the question should be phrased so that the student will explain, rather than defend her reasons. For example,"I was wondering if you had even considered talking with a counselor." The student may respond to the question with a multitude of reasons. However, all reasons, whether direct or indirect, will in essence force the student into a position of defending why she is a special type of person, who does not require an evaluation of her self-concept. You are now in a position to point out, in a positive manner, that counseling is generally accepted by the student body as beneficial to self-understanding. You may also indicate that the circumstances which stimulated this particular discussion are rather common reasons for meeting with the counselor.

4 - If the student expresses willingness to meet with a college counselor, complete a Guidance-Interview Referral Slip (Mrs. Roth has a supply). Forward it in a <u>sealed envelope</u> to a member of the technical staff of the Student Personnel Services Division who will arrange an appointment with the student. The regular counseling schedule for such personnel is:

Dr. Boris Blai, Jr.	Mondays, 2 to 5 p.m.
Dean Helen Nolan	Tuesdays, 2 to 5 p.m.
Mrs. Muriel Baker	Wednesdays, 2 to 5 p.m.
Mrs. Ann Ackley	Thursdays, 2 to 5 p.m.
Mrs. Jean Mowbray	Fridays, 2 to 5 p.m.

In connection with the preparation of the Guidance Interview Referral Slip, the following suggestions are offered to help give the college counselor essential information. On the face side of the form, the statement of the problem or reason for referral should be brief, specific, and to the point. For example, "Failing courses and falling behind instructional pace," "Performance too far below ability level," "Appears apathetic and does not contribute or participate," "Does not relate well to peers and becomes emotional easily."

On the back of the form, the faculty member/house director should include a brief evaluation of the student. <u>This is extremely pertinent</u> and makes several distinct contributions.

a - it is a professional opinion which will help clarify the educational and/or personal needs of the student.

b - there is always an interpersonal relationship between faculty member/house director and student which should be evaluated by a neutral third party.

c - strengths of the student as well as weaknesses should be included. Also observed incidents of information that will define the causes of the student behavior.

5- If the student still does not consent to counseling, leave the question open by remarking about how many other students have sought and found counseling satisfying. Set an appointment with the student approximately one week hence. Meet with the student, discuss again the desirability of meeting with the counselor, if in your judgment at that time the need still exists. If the student refuses to meet with the counselor then follow the next-described procedure - Compulsory Referrals.

III. Compulsory Referrals

The issue of whether or not to require a student to attend counseling has been controversial for decades. Regardless of such controversy, there is one very important inescapable fact, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." If all of the above-mentioned procedures have been followed without success and the student is in serious trouble, then little if anything can be lost by compelling the student to attend counseling.

Without question the best referral is the self-referral and it would be ideal if all student referrals were self-referrals. Although this premise may be true, from a practical viewpoint it is also idealistic hogwash! There will always be students who, regardless of encouragement for one reasons or another are unable to face themselves. If the student will not seek help, and is in obvious need of help, so obvious that she is likely to become a dropout or become emotional beyond the limits of acceptable behavior, then sacrificing "ideal" referral procedures is not important - helping the student is paramount!

Notify the staff member of the Student Personnel Services Division by completing a Guidance Interview Referral Slip (See II, 4 above) or telephone, if urgent.

Please consider that this compulsory referral is a last resort measure. The other methods mentioned above should be fully explored before resorting to a compulsory referral.

Iv Whom to Refer

To list specific types of students to refer is virtually impossible. However, behavior is far too complicated and varied to pinpoint a culminating of characteristics that would warrant referral. There are, of course, students whose behavior leaves little doubt of the need for improved adjustment. This type of student may represent myriad characteristics but essentially she will annoy the faculty member or house director by obstreperous behavior, consistent academic failure, or a combination of both!

Which students should be dealt with in the classroom-dormitory and which referred to the counselor is an area of judgment in which only the faculty member-house director can make the final decision. Following are guidelines which may help you decide.

1. Faculty members/house directors should not feel that referring a student to the counselor reporesents incompetence. Human behavior is far too complicated and teaching students or supervising their dormitory life is far too time-consuming to be able to administer to all the needs of the students.

2. When the faculty members' - house directors' endeavors to help a student are not proceeding with as much progress as efforts would seem to warrant, the student should be referred. Usually there are, in such instances, emotional conflicts that hamper progress.

3. Occasionally you may want to discuss a particular student with the counselor before referring her. This procedure is to be encouraged. However, you should not consider the counselor's comments to be a diagnosis of the student. Generally, it is better for the counselor to meet with both you and the student separately.

V Counselor - Faculty/House Director Cooperation

The most effective method of aiding students in their multiple adjustments is through the collective, cooperative efforts of the Counseling Team; administration, faculty, house directors and other staff personnel.

Faculty members/house directors observe how the student relates to peers, how she relates to the faculty member/house director as another authority figure, how she responds to classroom and dormitory limits and responsibilities and how well she uses her potentialities. In addition, counselors often elicit feelings and therefore can observe underlying causes for particular classroom and/or dormitory behavior. Depending solely on the one or the other can result in one-sided, unrealistic evaluations.

All of the members of the Counseling Team may be closely-knit into an integrated system of student guidance. The key to an effective student guidance service is frequent conferences in which there is free exchange of observations and evaluations so as to form a more complete picture of the "whole" person; as she progresses toward maturity and competence in living.

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The detailed procedure discussed in this document in no way affects the advisement-type referrals from faculty members/house directors to other college staff personnel and activities. When appropriate, students are to be referred to the Academic Dean, Librarian, Financial Aid Officer, Director of Health Center, Treasurer, Business Manager, Executive Housekeeper, Maintenance Director or other college services(mimeograph, book store, etc.).

A final thought - in counseling, it's the sequence of events that counts. It's somewhat like the absentminded professor who was about to pour syrup on his pancakes when a fly landed on his neck. So he poured syrup down his back and scratched his pancakes! An orderly, systematic approach to each counseling situation is <u>essential</u> if "scratched pancakes" are to be avoided!